

LXXXIX.

M E M O I R S

O F

L I T E R A T U R E.

MONDAY, November 26. 1711.

I.

M. MINUCII FELICIS OCTAVIUS, ex iterata Recensione JOANNIS DAVISII LL. D. Coll. Regin. Cantab. Socii; cum ejusdem Animadversionibus ac Notis integris *Des. Heraldii & Nic. Rigaltii*, necnon Selectis aliorum. Accedit COMMODIANUS ævi Cyprianici Scriptor, cum Observationibus antehac editis, aliisque nonnullis, quæ jam primum prodeunt. Cantabrigiæ, Typis Academicis. Impensis Cornelii Crownfield, celeberrimæ Academiæ Typographi. MDCCXII.

That is, A SECOND EDITION of a Dialogue of MINUCIUS FELIX, entitled OCTAVIUS, by JOHN DAVIES, LL. D. Fellow of Queen's College at Cambridge; with his own Observations, and those of Heraldus and Rigaltius, besides select Notes of others. To which is added COMMODIANUS, a Writer who lived in the Third Century, with the Remarks formerly publish'd, and some others, never before printed. Cambridge, 1712. in 8vo. Pagg. 269.

I. THIS Second Edition of *Minucius Felix*, publish'd by the Reverend Dr. Davies, will be very acceptable to the Publick, not only because it contains all the Notes of *Heraldus* and *Rigaltius*, and the best Remarks of some other Learned Men, but because the Editor has reformed and very much enlarged his own Observations in a great many Places. He undertakes to clear the Sense of the Author; to justify the common Reading, when there is Occasion for it; to illustrate several Expressions by com-

paring them with those of other Ancient Writers; to explain the Customs alluded to by *Minucius Felix*; and even to mend the Text in several Passages. Dr. Davies is one of those few Criticks of our Time, who discover a great Sagacity in removing the Faults, that have crept into the Ancient Books. I shall give some Instances of this Part of his Performance, being persuaded that the Readers will infer from thence, that his other Observations are not less judicious and valuable.

Pag. 20. *Nec immerito DISCEDENS* (Octavius) *vir eximius & sanctus, immensum sui desiderium nobis reliquit.*

It plainly appears from the whole Dialogue of *Minucius Felix*, that he composed it, after the Death of his Friend Octavius. But (says Dr. Davies) if we read *discedens* in this Passage, it cannot be inferred from it that Octavius was departed this Life. Whereupon he quotes these Words of St. Jerome, Ep. VII. of the last Paris-Edition: *Neminus mihi dereliquit abundo desiderium, quam attulerat veniendo letitiam*: Which are meant of a Person that was still alive. Our judicious Critick reads therefore the Passage of *Minucius Felix* thus: *Nec immerito DECEDENS* *vir eximius & sanctus immensum sui desiderium nobis reliquit.* To confirm his Emendation, he quotes among other Passages these Words of *Phædrus*, Lib. IV. Fab. 4. *Quidam DECEDENS tres reliquit filios.*

Pag. 71, 72. *Hoc fonte disfluxit Arcefila, & multa post Carneadis & Academicorum PLURIMORUM in summis questionibus tuta dubitatio; quo genere philosophari & caute indocti possunt, & docti gloriari.*

The Learned Editor raises an Objection against the word *plurimorum* in this Passage. Why should *Cæcilius* (one of the Interlocutors) say, That most Academicks doubt of every Thing, since it was the Character of all those Philosophers? The Doctor proves it by a Passage of *Cicero*, and another of *Arnobius*; and then reads the Words in question thus. *Hoc fonte disfluxit Arcefila, & multo post Carneadis, Academicorum, PYRRHONIORUM, in summis questionibus tuta dubitatio, &c.* The Academicks and the Pyrrhonists are frequently mentioned together by the Ancient Authors. Nay, (continues the Editor,) in the XXXVIIth Chapter of this Book, wherein Octavius answers what *Cæcilius* says here, we read these Words: *Arcefilas quoque & Carneades, & PYRRHO, & omnis ACADEMICORUM multitudo deliberet.* Dr. Davies, not contented with this Passage, whereby his Emendation is so happily confirmed, adds a Passage of *Seneca*, and another of *Origen*. I shall only insert that of *Seneca*, Ep. LXXXVIII. *PYRRHONII, (says that Philosopher) — & Megarici & Eretrici, & ACADEMICI — novam induxerunt scientiam, NIHIL SCIRE.*

Pag. 125. *Jam finitimos agro pallere, civitates proximæ convertere cum templis & altaribus, capros cogere, damnis aliis*

& suis sceleribus adolescere, cum Romulo regibus ceteris, & POSTREMIS ducibus disciplina communis est.

Dr. Davies observes upon these Words, that the first dukes of the Romans were not less guilty of the Crimes mentioned by Minucius Felix than the last, and therefore he thinks the word POSTREMIS is a Corruption. His Emendation removes the Difficulty, and appears very natural. The Passage, says he, ought to be read thus: Cum Romulo regibus ceteris & POSTERIS ducibus disciplina communis est. Posterius ducibus is to be understood in the same Sense as postera secula in Lucretius, Lib. III. v. 394.

Pag. 164. Scripta eorum (Judæorum) relege, vel si Romanis magis gaudes, ut transeamus veteres, FLAVII JOSEPHI, vel Antonii Juliani de Judæis require.

There is a manifest Opposition in these Words between the Jewish and the Roman Writers; and therefore, says the Doctor, Josephus who profess'd the Jewish Religion, and was born a Jew, is improperly mentioned in this Passage. Besides, Josephus writ in Greek, and his Works were not translated into Latin in Minucius's time. Dr. Davies infers from thence that the words Flavii Josephi are a gloss, that crept from the Margin into the Text, and reads the Passage thus. Scripta eorum (Judæorum) relege, vel, si Romanis magis gaudes, ut transeamus veteres, Antonii Juliani de Judæis require. Josephus being a famous Writer, and treating the same Subject as Antonius Julianus, 'tis very likely (says the Doctor) that some body inserted his Name in the Margin, and that a Copist took it in afterwards as being part of the Text.

The Observations of Dr. Davies upon Minucius Felix are Learned and Judicious; and this new Edition will be generally esteemed by all those, who are able to judge of the Merit of such a Performance. I hope the Doctor * will publish in time a new Edition of some other Father. The best Pieces of the Ancient Doctors of the Church should be more common than they are, and illustrated with new Observations.

II. The Instructions of Commodianus, a Writer of the Third Century, have been inserted at the end of Minucius Felix, with Rigaltius's Notes, and those of Dr. Davies. That Author has a harsh Style, and is more commendable for his Piety than for his Wit. The Readers will be glad to find him here, because the Copies of that Work are scarce. Besides, there are in it some Passages, whereby the Greek and Latin Antiquities may be illustrated; and the reading of that Book will be of great Use upon some other Accounts, as Rigaltius observes. "Denique, says that Critick, usus & efficacia libelli hujusce fuerit, constans & perpetuus amor Christi; animus ad martyrium fortis; pietas erga pauperes maxima. Hoc præterea scire, vitia, quæ etiamnum Ecclesiam dehonestant, esse vetustissima. Infinitam semper fuisse de rebus divinis disputantium multitudinem, paucissimos vere Christianos.

Dr. Davies has corrected the Text of Commodianus in several Places. I shall only mention two of his Emendations.

Pag. 204. O nimium stulti qui putatis Maiores ab astris, Nascentes regere, aut totam mundi naturam. In vulnera positi, & ipsi sub fata viventes, Obsceni, CURIOSI, bellatores, impie vite.

In the last Line, the Editor reads FURIOSI instead of CURIOSI: Which is an undeniable Correction.

Pag. 216. Nam quod IN VANIS sequeris, per tempora GAUDET. In brevi lataris, & postmodum plangis in imis.

The first Line is unintelligible. The Editor reads it thus,

Nam quod INANES sequeris, per tempora GAUDES,

and confirms his Emendation by two Passages. Commodian. Instruct. II. 2. Nolite, inquit, adorare Deos INANES.

* The Doctor is about a new Edition of Cicero, De Natura Deorum. I hear it is in great Forwardness.

Lactant. Div. Instit. Lib. II. c. 1. Gestio enim conviciis INANIBUS ——— singularis Dei adferere majestatem.

Here follows another Remark of Dr. Davies, wherein he mends a wrong Explication of Rigaltius.

Pag. 206. Vane, non insanis, colere deos pictos in axe?

Rigaltius will have the Words in axe to signify in coelo. One might wonder how that Critick could be guilty of such an Error, were it not that the most Learned Men fall sometimes into strange Mistakes. Axis in this Place plainly signifies a Board. Festus upon the word axis, says, Tabula scætilis axis appellatur. And we read in Aulus Gellius, Noct. Attic. Lib. II. cap. 12. In legibus Solonis illis antiquissimis, quæ Athenis axibus ligneis incisæ sunt.

I shall conclude with an excellent Observation of Dr. Davies, which might have been inserted in the first part of this Article. The Doctor takes notice of a Mistake in these Words of Minucius Felix. Et Plato ideo præclare Homerum illum inclytum, laudatum & coronatum, de civitate, quam IN SERMONE instituebat, eiecit. That Author should have said, de civitate, quam RATIONE instituebat, eiecit, to express the true Sense of the Greek Word λόγῳ. Dr. Davies, who has the Passages of the Ancients ready at hand, upon all Occasions, observes that St. Austin avoided that Mistake, as it appears from these Words, de Civit. Dei Lib. II. cap. 14. An forte Platoni Græco potius palma danda est, qui cum RATIONE formaret, qualis esse civitas debeat, tanquam adversarios civitatis Poetas censuit urbe pellendos.

II.

P R O J E T d'une nouvelle Grammaire pour apprendre l'Hebreu, & les anciennes Langues Orientales sans Points. Par Monsieur M A S C L E F, Chanoine d'Amiens. Premiere Partie.

That is, A P R O J E C T of a New Grammar to learn Hebrew, and the Ancient Oriental Languages without Points. By M. M A S C L E F, Canon of Amiens. Part I.

T H O' the first Part of this Project consists only of Thirty Pages in 120. I rather chuse to give an Extract of it, than to insert it at length, being persuaded that a short Account of that Piece will be sufficient to satisfy the Curiosity of the Readers.

The Author having observed, that the Sciences are not so entirely exhausted, but that they may afford still some new Discoveries, adds, that he ventures to communicate to the Publick a new Method to learn the Hebrew Tongue, and the Ancient Oriental Languages; and then proceeds in the following manner.

It has been so fully proved, says he, that the Points made use of to read Hebrew, on which all the Grammars of that Language are grounded, were invented by the Massorets, several Ages after the Beginning of Christianity, that there are now but few Writers of any Distinction, who dare affirm the contrary. Some Authors place the Invention of those Points in the Fifth Century; others, in the Ninth. Granting the first Epoch to be true, it will follow from it, that the Hebrew Points were not invented till about a Thousand Years after the Hebrew Tongue ceased to be the common Language of the Jews; since this Alteration happen'd, either during the Captivity of Babylon, or soon after. But that Space of Time, and even a shorter one, is sufficient for my purpose.

The Hebrew Grammar is still of a later Date. And indeed it could not be formed till after the Invention of the Points; and 'tis well known that there was no such Grammar before the Tenth Century.

Which

Which being granted, it must be confest that the *Massorets*, who fixed the Pronunciation of the *Hebrew* Tongue, and laid down the Rules of Grammar, with the Help of their Points, could not Know how that Language was pronounced, when it was in use. The *Hebrew* had not been the common Language of the *Jews* above a Thousand Years; and every body knows that the Pronunciation of any Language will be quite forgotten in a much shorter Time. The *Greek* and *Latin* Tongues are a plain Proof of it. It is acknowledged by the most Learned Criticks, that we are altogether ignorant how those Two Languages were pronounced in the Time of *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*. And yet neither of them has been so long disused: and there is a great Difference between those Criticks, who endeavoured to retrieve their true Pronunciation, and the *Massorets*. The former, besides a lively Genius, improved by a vast Knowledge, had a great many *Greek* and *Latin* Books, even upon all Sorts of Grammatical Questions; whereas the *Massorets* were Men of very indifferent Parts, and had no other *Hebrew* Book but the Bible, being moreover destitute of all Sort of Learning.

Perhaps it will be objected, that the *Massorets* learn'd by a constant Tradition the true and ancient Pronunciation of the *Hebrew* Tongue. To enforce this Objection, it will be said that many *Jews*, in all Ages, studied the *Hebrew* Bible; and that *Moses* and the Prophets were read in *Hebrew*, and the Psalms sung in that Language, in all the *Jewish* Synagogues. But this is not sufficient to make one believe, that the *Massorets* preserved or retrieved the Ancient Pronunciation of the *Hebrew* Tongue; for, the same Helps have not been wanting to preserve the Pronunciation of *Greek* and *Latin*. A vast Number of People made use of those Two Languages in all Ages: A prodigious Number of *Greek* and *Latin* Books are extant to this Day: Nay, the Church has preserved and consecrated those Two Languages in her Offices; and yet their true Pronunciation is lost, without any Hopes of Recovering it. The same ought therefore to be said of the *Hebrew* Tongue, notwithstanding the Tradition alledg'd to prove the contrary.

This Objection will appear weaker still, if we consider the Alterations and Changes of that Tradition. The *Massorets* knew without doubt how to pronounce *Hebrew*, as it was pronounced in their Time. The Septuagint did also pronounce it, as it was pronounced in their Days. The same ought to be said of *Josephus*, *Origen*, *St. Jerome*, and other Ancient Doctors. Why then do they not agree with the *Massorets* about that Pronunciation? 'Tis because the Tradition has not been always the same. But if that Tradition has undergone several Changes, how could it be sufficient to hinder the *Massorets* from running into Mistakes about a Thing so uncertain and so intricate?

Perhaps it will be said, that notwithstanding the various Pronunciation of the *Hebrew* Tongue at several times, we must acknowledge at least, that the *Massoretick* way of Pronouncing it, is the best. But, not to insist upon the Impossibility of proving such an Assertion, it appears from several Arguments, that the Pronunciation of the *Massorets* is very faulty, and frequently more imperfect than others.

In the first place, if it be considered that the Tradition in Question has been subject to many Alterations for so many Ages, and that the *Massorets* pronounced *Hebrew* differently from the Septuagint, and the other Ancient Translators; is it not very natural to infer from thence, that their Pronunciation must needs be more different from the true one?

The Pronunciation of the *Massorets* runs upon Two Heads. 1. Upon the Sound, which they ascribe to each Letter of the *Hebrew* Alphabet. 2. Upon the Vowels, which must be understood in those Syllables, wherein they are not expressed; for every body knows the *Hebrews* did not write all the Vowels which they pronounced. It is no difficult thing to shew that upon those Two Heads, the *Massorets* are far from following the ancient, and consequently the true Pronunciation of the *Hebrew*. As for what concerns the Letters, the *Massorets*, and their Followers, affirm that they are all Consonants, and that there is no Vowel among them. But how can any one believe it? At this rate, those Letters that have

no Sound by themselves, have been invented; but those that have a Sound, have been laid aside. Why were Letters invented? Was it not to express Sounds? But Vowels are infinitely more necessary to that End than Consonants: And therefore 'tis not true that the latter were invented, and the former quite forgotten. Besides, don't we find in the *Hebrew* Alphabet י ו ם ך, that is, *a, e, i, u, aleph, he, jod, vau*? Those Letters are true Vowels, tho' the *Massorets* deny it.

Our Author mentions some Mistakes of the *Massorets* relating to Consonants, and then proceeds to the Second Head, viz. the Vowels which they add where they think it necessary. Wherein, says he, they differ from the Ancients, not only by inserting Vowels where the Ancients inserted none, or, on the contrary, by inserting no Vowels where the Ancients inserted some; but also by inserting different Vowels.

M. Maseles gives some Instances of it, by shewing how the Ancients and the *Massorets* read proper Names very differently. This Difference is no less conspicuous in other Words, even so far as to alter their Signification. What is among the Ancients a Singular Number, a Masculine Gender, a First Person, an Active Verb, a Future Tense, a Word derived from a certain Root, appears among the *Massorets* a Plural Number, a Feminine Gender, a Second Person, a Passive Verb, a Preter-Tense, a Word derived from a quite different Root; because they have been pleased to insert some Vowels in those places, whereby the Words are determined to a certain Sense. 'Tis true, the Sense which the *Massorets* put upon them, is sometimes preferable to that of the Ancients; but it frequently proves worse, as several Eminent Authors have shewed at large. 'Tis observable, that the *Massorets* do not only differ from the Ancients, such as the Septuagint, *Origen*, *St. Jerome*, &c. in their way of Reading and Pointing some Words, but also from the *Talmudists*. Nay, from the Time of the *Massorets* to this present Age, their Pronunciation has undergone very great Alterations. The *Jews* pronounce now some Vowels, for instance, the *Cametz*, quite otherwise than the *Massorets*, as it has been observed by some Learned Men: Nor do they agree among themselves about the Pronunciation. The *Eastern Jews* pronounce *Hebrew* one way, and the *Western* another way: The *Portuguese* pronounce it differently from those that live in *Germany*. The Christians are still more divided among themselves, insomuch that those who learn'd *Hebrew* of different Masters, have frequently much ado to understand one another. So true it is, that 'tis impossible to know exactly the true and ancient Pronunciation of the *Hebrew* Tongue; which is the Second Principle that was to be laid down. The Author confirms his Opinion by a Passage out of *Druhus*.

In the next Place, he lays down a Third Principle to support his new Method. In order to understand *Hebrew*, says he, 'tis altogether needless to know how it was pronounced formerly. Is it necessary to know how *Greek* was read and pronounced in the time of *Demosthenes*, to learn that Language? Not in the least. So 'tis with the *Hebrew* Tongue. The Signification of *Hebrew* Words lies in the Characters, and not in the manner of pronouncing them. As long as the Characters are preserved, every thing is safe. The Author adds that one might raise the same Difficulties against the Pronunciation of the *Jews* in the time of *Origen*, as against that of the *Massorets*.

M. Maseles having endeavoured to shew, that the Pronunciation and Punctuation of the *Massorets* may be laid aside, establishes a fourth Principle in order to prove that it ought to be actually rejected. In order to understand the *Hebrew* Text of the Holy Scripture, says the Author, and to translate it according to critical Rules, it ought to be read without the Points of the *Massorets*, for several Reasons.

First, the Points of the *Massorets* have been added to the *Hebrew* Text, and make no part of the Holy Scripture.

Those Points do not represent the Sense of the Sacred Writers, but only that which is ascribed to them by the *Massorets*, who were not infallible in their Punctuation.

From whence it follows, that whoever reads the Bible, as it has been pointed by those *Jews*, cannot pretend to read

read it in its original Purity : He only reads the Commentary of the *Massorets*.

Besides it ought to be observed, that the *Massorets* pointed the Bible according to their prejudicated Opinions; and that their Punctuation is frequently wrong, as it has been proved by several great Criticks.

These Considerations lead the Author to a fifth Principle, *viz.* That in order to have a good *Hebrew* Grammar, it must be such as may teach the *Hebrew* Tongue without Points; since 'tis plain that the Design of a Grammar can only be the understanding of a Language. Whereupon M. *Maslef* bestows a great Encomium upon *Lewis Cappel*, and quotes a long Passage of that Learned Critick out of the Vith Book of his *Critica Sacra*, Chap. XI. That Chapter is entitl'd, *Nova Grammatica ratio ex ista de variis lectionibus observatione instituenda*. Cappel " shews at large the " Insufficiency of the Punctuation and Grammar of the " *Massorets*, and the necessity of composing a new Grammar. He lays down the Plan and the Rules of it, and " above all Things would have it to be without Points. " 'Tis true the Difficulties of succeeding in such a Design appear to him insuperable; and therefore he only " wishes that some body may at last prove more happy " than he has been, and invent such a Grammar, for which " he had taken so much Pains.

I need not insert here the Passage of that Author: his *Critica Sacra* is not a scarce Book. M. *Maslef* concludes his Discourse with these Words. " It appears that the " only Reason why Cappel dares not affirm, that the Grammar of the *Massorets* ought to be wholly rejected, or decide whether it be possible to have a better one than theirs, is because he supposed that it was impossible to read *Hebrew* without Points; being otherwise disposed to lay aside that Grammar, if any one could find a more certain and convenient way of Pointing and Pronouncing *Hebrew*.

" What Cappel dares not affirm to be possible, appears to me not only possible, but even so easy, that I am surpris'd how so Learned a Man, who had meditated so long upon that Subject, did not perceive it. This I shall shew in the Second Part of my Project.

I shall give an Account of it, as soon as it comes to my Hands.

R O U E N.

AN Historical Discourse concerning the Election of the Emperor, and the Electors of the Empire, has been reprinted here.

Discours Historique de l'Election de l'Empereur & des Electeurs de l'Empire, par le Resident de Brandebourg. Rouen, 1711. in 120. pagg. 612.

This Book was printed the first time in 1658. in 4to. The Famous M. de *Wicquefort* is the Author of it.

P A R I S.

THE Abbot de *Veyrac* has publish'd, *The Present State of the Empire, &c.* That Author is very methodical, and his Book is written with great Perspicuity. He criticizes several Passages in the *History of the Empire* publish'd by M. *Heiss*, without pretending to lessen the Merit of that Historian.

L'Estat present de l'Empire, où l'on voit son origine, son établissement, ses progrès, ses revolutions, les droits de l'Empereur, du Roy des Romains, des Electeurs, des Princes, & des autres Etats, qui le composent; la maniere de convoquer & de tenir les Diettes; les cérémonies qui s'observent à l'Election & au Couronnement de l'Empereur; & generalement tout ce qui regarde la forme du Gouvernement Germanique: Avec une

III.

A NEW OBSERVATION upon the Nature and the Qualities of the wild Ash-Tree, shewing that it may serve instead of *Sena*. By M. TABLET.

BY taking a narrow View of the Nature of *Sena*, especially of that, which is brought into *France* from *Tripoli*, I plainly found that it was of the same Species with the wild Ash-tree, that grows plentifully in Woods. The Leaves of both Plants are pointed. Those Two Shrubs have ligneous Stalks, the Branches whereof come near the Colour and Figure of those of *Licorish*: They have a gluish Savour, and are bitter and odoriferous. The Flowers of both Plants come out at the End of the Branches, and look like *Roses*.

As for the Virtues of the wild Ash-tree, its Leaves do admirably purge, in the same Quantity as those of *Sena*, and do not occasion such a violent Gripping of the Guts, because *Sena* growing in a hot Climate, has not so much Phlegm, and abounds more with Acrimonious Salts. On the contrary, The wild Ash-tree is full of Tartarous Sulphur, and Armoniack Salt, united together with a clammy Phlegm; for it affords, through a Chymical Analysis, a great deal of Oil and Acid Phlegm. And therefore I may very well affirm, having tried its purgative Virtue upon several Persons, that this Kind of *Sena*, which is so common in *France*, ought to be preferred to that, which is brought into this Kingdom from *Alexandria*, *Tripoli*, and *Italy*.

Critique de plusieurs points importants de l'Histoire de M. Heiss. Le tout extrait des anciennes Constitutions Imperiales, de la Bulle d'Or, & des Ouvrages des meilleurs Auteurs qui nyent écrit sur cette matiere. Par M. l'Abbé de Veyrac. Paris 1711. in 120. pagg. 360.

E R R A T U M.

In the Last Sheet, Pag. 351. Col. 2. Lin. 35. for totius read toties.

Advertisment.

NEW Perspective-Glasses are to be Sold by way of Subscription at Mr. *Dillon's* in *Long Acre*, next door to the *White Hart*, where Proposals may be had. With the Help of those Perspective-Glasses, any one that looks forwards, may take a view of any Object, that is on the Right Hand, or on the Left; and no body can discover what he looks at. Some other Uses of the same Glasses, are described in the said Proposals.

L O N D O N : Printed by J. Roberts: And Sold by A. Baldwin, near the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-Lane. (Price 2 d.)